

## CLAIMS

### What is claimed is:

1. A computer-implemented method for associating comments with source code, the method comprising:  
  
storing the comments separately from the source code; and  
  
identifying where each of the comments is associated with the source code.
2. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, further comprising enabling a provision of the comments within the source code.
3. The computer-implemented method of claim 2, wherein the provision of the comments within the source code includes:  
  
retrieving the comments from a storage; and  
  
displaying the retrieved comments together with the source code.
4. The computer-implemented method of claim 2, wherein enabling the provision of the comments within the source code occurs according to filter information.
5. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein filter information is assigned to the comments for filtering the comments.
6. The computer-implemented method of claim 4, wherein enabling the provision includes:  
  
comparing access authorization information pertaining to a context in which the comments would be provided with the filter information assigned to the comments; and

providing the comments only if the filter information matches the access authorization information.

7. The computer-implemented method of claim 4, wherein access authorization information is obtained prior to retrieving the comments from the storage, the access authorization information determining whether the comments may be accessed.

8. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the source code comprises links including storage information for retrieving the comments.

9. The computer-implemented method of claim 8, wherein enabling the provision includes accessing the links.

10. The computer-implemented method of claim 9, wherein filter information is assigned to the links for filtering the comments.

11. The computer-implemented method of claim 10, wherein accessing the links includes:

comparing access authorization information with the filter information assigned to the links; and

retrieving the comments if the filter information matches the access authorization information.

12. The computer-implemented method of claim 10, wherein enabling the provision includes:

analyzing access authorization information to determine which links may be accessed; and

activating the links that may be accessed.

13. The computer-implemented method of claim 10, wherein the links are assigned to particular elements of the source code.

14. The computer-implemented method of claim 10, wherein displaying the retrieved comments together with the source code includes replacing the accessed links within the source code with the comments.

15. The computer-implemented method of claim 10, wherein enabling the provision includes:

analyzing access authorization information to determine which links may be accessed; and

displaying in the source code the links that may be accessed.

16. The computer-implemented method of claim 2, wherein at least one element of the source code is associated with more than one comment stored within the storage.

17. The computer-implemented method of claim 4, wherein enabling a provision of the comments within the source code includes:

retrieving all the comments from the storage;

selecting according to the filter information which comments to suppress within the source code; and

displaying together with the source code the retrieved comments not selected to be suppressed.

18. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the comments are stored within a database.

19. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the comments include language-dependent comments having language information, wherein retrieving the comments includes retrieving the language information, and wherein enabling the provision of the comments includes considering the language information, and wherein the provision of the comments includes the provision of the language-dependent comments according to the language information.

20. The computer-implemented method of claim 4, wherein the filter information includes a user role.

21. The computer-implemented method of claim 4, wherein the filter information includes a user group.

22. The computer-implemented method of claim 4, wherein the filter information includes a source code version.

23. A computer-implemented method for associating comments with source code, the method comprising

storing the comments separately from the source code,  
storing links providing storage information of the stored comments within the source code;

using access authorization information determining filter information for filtering the comments for retrieving the comments;

retrieving the comments from a storage according to the filter information using the storage information from the links;

identifying where each of the comments is associated with the source code;  
and

providing the retrieved comments within the source code.

24. A computer program product with a computer program stored thereon for associating comments with source code, the program comprising instructions operable to cause a processor to store the comments separately from the source code, and to identify where each of the comments is associated with the source code.

25. The computer program product of claim 24, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to send request information for retrieving the comments from a storage,

receive the comments from the storage, and

present the received comments within the source code.

26. The computer program product of claim 24, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to cause a processor to present the comments within the source code according to filter information.

27. The computer program product of claim 24, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to associate filter information with the comments for filtering the comments.

28. The computer program product of claim 24, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to transmit access authorization information to the storage when retrieving the comments, compare the access authorization information with the filter information associated with the comments, and provide the comments only if the filter information matches the access authorization information.

29. The computer program product of claim 28, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to retrieve access authorization information prior to retrieving the comments from the storage, the access authorization information determining which of the comments may be retrieved.

30. The computer program product of claim 24, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to handle links providing storage information relating to where the comments belong within the source code.

31. The computer program product of claim 29, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to associate filter information with the links for filtering the comments.

32. The computer program product of claim 30, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to activate the links for use, compare access authorization information with the filter information associated with a link when the link is used, and execute the link to retrieve the comments only if the filter information matches the access authorization information.

33. The computer program product of claim 29, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to retrieve access authorization information prior to the links being used to retrieve the comments from the storage, the access authorization information determining whether the links may be executed when accessing the comments.

34. The computer program product of claim 29, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to associate the links with particular elements of the source code.

35. The computer program product of claim 29, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to present the comments within the source code by replacing a link within the source code with the comments when the link is executed.

36. The computer program product of claim 29, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to retrieve access authorization information prior to revealing the links, the access authorization information determining whether the link is visible within the source code.

37. The computer program product of claim 24, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to associate at least one element of the source code with more than one comment stored within the storage.

38. The computer program product of claim 24, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to retrieve all comments before presenting the received comments within the source code, to analyze the filter information of the comments to select the comments to suppress, and, to present within the source code the retrieved comments that were not suppressed.

39. The computer program product of claim 24, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to store the comments within a database.

40. The computer program product of claim 24, the computer program further comprising instructions operable to cause the processor to store storage language-dependent comments having language information, to retrieve the language information with the language-dependent comments, to analyze the language information, and to present the language-dependent comments according to the analysis of the language information.

41. A computer program product with a computer program stored thereon for associating comments with source code, the program comprising instructions operable to cause a processor to store the comments separately from the source code,

read links providing storage information of the stored comments from the source code,

send request information for retrieving the comments from a storage, using access authorization information determining filter information for filtering the comments,

receive the comments from the storage,

identify where each of the comments is associated with the source code, and provide the received comments within the source code.

42. A computer system for associating comments with source code, the system comprising:



a first storage medium storing the source code;

a second storage medium storing the comments, the second storage medium being separate from the first storage medium;

a computer comprising a processor in communication with the first storage medium and the second storage medium; and

a computer program having instructions operable to cause the processor to store the comments separately from the source code in the second storage medium, and to identify where each of the comments is associated with the source code.

43. The computer system of claim 41, wherein the computer program further includes instructions operable to cause the processor to retrieve the source code from the first storage medium, to display the source code on the computer, to retrieve comments from the second storage medium, and to provide the retrieved comments within the source code.

44. The computer system of claim 41, wherein the computer program further includes instructions operable to cause the processor to provide the comments within the source code according to filter information.

45. The computer system of claim 41, wherein the computer program further includes instructions operable to cause the processor to associate filter information with the comments for filtering the comments.

46. The computer system of claim 41, wherein the computer program further includes instructions operable to cause the processor to compare access authorization information with the filter information associated with a comment, and

to provide the comment within the source code only if the filter information matches the access authorization information.

47. The computer system of claim 45, wherein the computer program further includes instructions operable to cause the processor to compare the access authorization information prior to retrieving the comment from the second storage medium, the access authorization information determining whether the comment may be retrieved.

48. The computer system of claim 41, wherein the computer program further includes instructions operable to cause the processor to use links containing storage information of the comments to indicate where the comments belong within the source code.

49. The computer system of claim 47, wherein the links are associated with filter information for filtering the comments.

50. The computer system of claim 48, wherein the computer program further includes instructions operable to cause the processor to compare access authorization information with the filter information of a link, and to execute the link to retrieve the comments only if the filter information matches the access authorization information.

51. The computer system of claim 47, wherein the computer program further includes instructions operable to cause the processor to analyze access authorization information prior to attempted execution of the links to retrieve the comments from the second storage medium, the access authorization information determining which of the links may be used to retrieve the comments.

52. The computer system of claim 47, wherein the links are associated with particular portions of the source code.

53. The computer system of claim 47, wherein the instructions operable to cause a processor to provide the retrieved comments within the source code by replacing the links with the comments when the links are executed.

54. The computer system of claim 47, wherein the computer program further includes instructions operable to cause the processor to analyze access authorization information prior to attempted execution of the links to retrieve the comments from the second storage medium, the access authorization information determining which of the links are visible when the source code is displayed.

55. The computer system of claim 41, wherein at least one portion of source code is associated with more than one comment.

56. The computer system of claim 41, wherein the computer program further includes instructions operable to cause a processor to retrieve all comments before providing the received comments within the source code, to analyze filter information of the comments to select the comments to suppress, and, to provide within the source code the retrieved comments that were not suppressed.

57. The computer system of claim 41, wherein the second storage medium includes a database for storing the comments.

58. The computer system of claim 41, wherein the comments include language-dependent comments having language information, and wherein the computer program further includes instructions operable to cause the processor to retrieve the language information with the language-dependent comments, to

analyze the language information, and to provide the language-dependent comments according to the analysis of the language information.